



Plant Product Exports Make Record Run in 2015

Release Date: 1/28/16

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MADISON – Plant product exports certified pest-free by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and shipped to international markets topped \$1 billion for the first time in 2015.

Exporters need certificates to ship plants or materials derived from plants. These products range from nursery plants to grain and seed to lumber to decorative materials. The certificates tell the state or nation receiving the products that they meet all that state's or nation's plant pest and disease requirements. Before issuing a certificate, staff from the Department's Bureau of Plant Industry research requirements for the destination, and inspect the products if a federal inspector has not already done so. Exporters pay a fee for the certificates.

"Wisconsin wood products continue to be an area of growth," said DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel. "Also, Indonesia has been importing high volumes of soybean products. That's where the high value is coming from."

Soybean products accounted for \$758.7 million of the total \$1.1 billion worth of plant product certified for export. Exporters from surrounding states often come to Wisconsin to certify their plant products for export, so those totals include soybeans grown in other states. Value of the Wisconsin soybeans certified for export was \$252.9 million.

Along with the strength in Asian markets, high-quality customer service contributes to the strong numbers.

"Exporters can get certificates from us or from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, but a lot of the time they come to us because we turn the applications around fast – usually within 24 hours," said Greg Helmbrecht, who heads up the plant export certification program.

Lumber, logs and veneer accounted for \$86.9 million. All of those products were Wisconsin produced. Other major exports were distillers dried grain, totaling \$115.7 million, with \$38.6 million of that coming from Wisconsin; and corn products, \$124.2 million total and \$41.6 million from Wisconsin.

The value of products shipped under certification from the bureau totaled \$1.1 billion last year, up from about \$850 million in 2014. About \$431.8 million of that amount was for products grown or processed in Wisconsin. Soybean, corn, distillers grain and wood products make up about 98 percent of the certified shipments.

The biggest markets for the goods were Indonesia (\$602.9 million), China (\$153.6 million), and Taiwan (\$127.7 million).

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